

Wrestling: Young Bucks Ready For Challenge

Yankton Returns One Senior Wrestler With Experience

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After another big graduating class left the Yankton Bucks wrestling program, the Bucks find themselves on the young side this season.

The Bucks sport just three seniors — only one with experience — and will be counting on several freshmen and eighth graders to fill spots in the lineup. Yankton will also be looking at potential open spots at 185 and 220 pounds.

Yankton began its season with a dual victory over Sioux Falls Washington, followed by a sixth-place finish at the Watertown Dual Tournament on Dec. 3.

"That goes hand in hand with youth," said Yankton head coach Ryan Hage. "We have 37, 38 guys in the room and 17 are in the eighth grade. When nearly half of your team is eighth graders, you're going to struggle filling those upper weights."

The Bucks' lone returning senior is Logan Smith, a state champion for Yankton a year ago. He will try to become just the seventh Buck to win multiple state titles, the first since former Nebraska wrestler Andy Johnson did it in 2005-06.

"We are pretty excited about the opportunity to return a state champion," Hage noted. "Logan has



BUCKS | MATT HUBER

worked hard to defend his title, but he has a lot of work left to do."

Smith, who enters his senior season with an 88-37 career record, could move into the top five in career victories for YHS if he remains healthy. He will also be looked upon to anchor the team in the wrestling room.

"He has a lot of added responsibilities on his shoulders," Hage noted. "But I am confident that he is the guy for the job."

Smith will wrestle at either 145 or 152 during the season, with 145 his likely lineup slot in the post-season. Trading spots with him in the dual lineup will be freshman Levi Davis. He wrestled two matches at the varsity level last season, going 1-1.

"Levi looks very good right now," Hage noted. "I'm

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BUCKS | LOGAN SMITH

MMC Women Look To Continue Success

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Despite graduating over half its scoring from a season ago, the Mount Marty College women's basketball team has not lowered its standards as they enter the 2011-12 campaign.

MMC returns two starters, three others who had at least one start a year ago, and five who saw action in 15 games or more last season.

"We're not coming back with an empty boat," said Mount Marty head coach Tom Schlimgen, who guided the team to a school-record third consecutive 20-win season (22-10) and a second NAIA Division II Tournament berth in three years in 2010-11.

"We lost two all-conference players, two of our leading scorers, but our kids felt the same way at the beginning of last season after we lost (All-American) Michelle Amundson."

Through games as of Dec. 5 Mount Marty is 6-6 overall and 1-3 in the Great Plains Athletic Conference (GPAC).

The Lancers graduated all-GPAC players in Jenny Miller and Cassie Neth, and another starter in Tierney Schumacher. Between them they totaled 36.1 points a game for a team that averaged 69.1 points a contest.

Senior Kylie Gross (13.2 ppg, 8.2 rpg this season) is the top returning scorer and rebounder from a season ago, and will be expected to carry more of the load this season, as will fellow senior Kaylea Karst (5 ppg, 2.8 rpg).

"Our two seniors, Kylie and Kaylea, we're putting a lot of responsibility on their shoulders," Schlimgen said. "Kylie is a good defender, a good rebounder. Kaylea has taken on more leadership, too."

Junior Alexa Berg (10 ppg, 2.7 rpg) joins Gross as the only other returning starter for the Lancers, and will also be expected to provide more offense.

"She was one of our leaders, though her stats don't bounce out at you. She's a blue-collar



LANCERS | APRIL WINNE

player, a really solid defender," Schlimgen said. "We're going to look for her to pick up her scoring. She's really worked hard in the off-season."

Junior Taylor Forsch (18.2 ppg, 3.1 rpg), who started six games a year ago, has filled Neth's role at the point and has taken over a bulk of the scoring load.

"We didn't plan on doing that right away, but she played so well there in practice. We think Forsch is going to have a good year for us," Schlimgen said. "Our scheme won't be much different than last year."

Junior Hannah Youngberg (2.3 ppg, 1.1 rpg) and sophomores

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April Winne (6 ppg, 2.8 rpg), Alyssa Whetham (2.2 ppg, 1.4 rpg) and Johanna Scheich (0.9 ppg) could all contribute in the guard spots.

"We look for Hannah to be a more consistent scorer," Schlimgen said. "Winne moved to the 2-guard spot and could back up the point. Alyssa has had a good pre-season and could get some time for us early on. Johanna has

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MMC Men

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Ackelson leads the team in scoring (13.6), rebounds (8.3), assists (3.0) and steals (2.6) per game.

Referencing Eddie and Ackelson, Thorson joked, "We needed guard help and we definitely got it."

Another transfer, junior forward Scott Odekirk (5.3 ppg, 4 rpg), also comes to Mount Marty from the junior college level — Southwestern Oregon Community College. He will be joined in the front court by fellow reserves Austin Harms (11.6 ppg), a junior

who played in 15 games last season, junior Jeff Larsen (who saw time in just 13 games) and senior Tom Kahler (4.3 ppg).

"We needed some depth in those spots, and even though we didn't really bring in a lot of guys, we've got some strength there," Thorson said.

Other varsity reserves include Chevy Fischer (So.), Zach Wevik (So.), Jordan Knippling (So.), along with freshmen Tyler Payer (Tripp-Delmont-Armour), Hayden Barker and Matt Hilgers.

In all, the Lancers return 69 percent of its scoring from a team that averaged 67.6 points per game. A pre-season exhibition with S.D. Tech, in which four MMC players scored in double figures, was a good indication of the offense for the season, Thor-

son said.

"We'll have pretty balanced scoring again," he said. "I don't see any 20 or 30 point a game type of players. I feel if we're going to be good, that's how it's going to be."

This season, Mount Marty has defeated Ashford (Iowa), Presentation, Concordia and Doane.

Though they were picked the finish 11th — last — in the GPAC, the Lancers could have the pieces in place to make another run at a post-season victory, Thorson said.

"With all the new people, we have hopes that they'll fill in the spots with the returners and we can make something out of it," he said. "Things have been going pretty good with that so far, so we'll see how it plays out."

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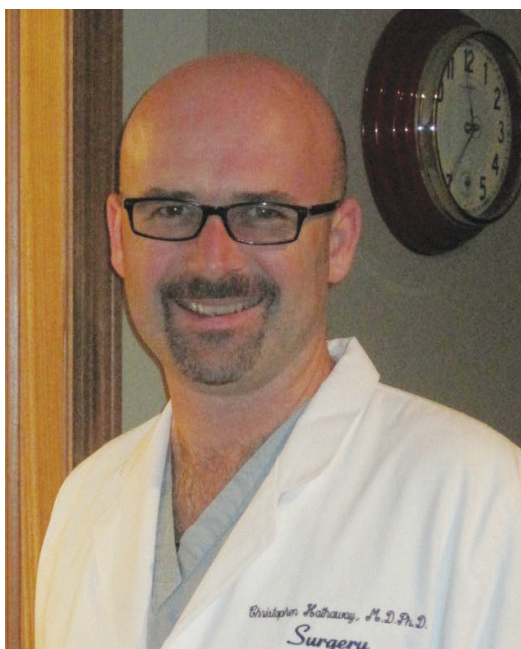


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